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RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND IPA; NSC FOR SHAPIRO/KUMAR; JOINT
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [ASEC](#) [PHUM](#) [KWBG](#) [KAWC](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: PA HEALTH MINISTER ISSUES PRESS RELEASE ON
GOLDSTONE REPORT

Classified By: Acting Principal Officer Greg Marchese
for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

¶1. (C) On September 20, PA Health Minister Fathi Abu Mughni issued a press release endorsing the recently-issued UN fact-finding report authored by Judge Richard Goldstone. Abu Mughni, according to the press release, called the report an "explicit condemnation" of Israeli combat operations in the Gaza Strip from December 2008 to January 2009, and called on civil, humanitarian, and grassroots institutions to demand the imposition of sanctions on Israel for "violations of international law" and "war crimes." He also called upon the Human Rights Council and UN Security Council to compel Israel to "lift the siege" on the Gaza Strip, end occupation of the Palestinian territories, and engage in genuine negotiations with the Palestinians on the basis of the two-state principle.

¶2. (C) The Ministry of Health's press release is the first, and so far the only, statement from the Palestinian Authority regarding the Goldstone report since the text of the report became public. Post has no information indicating that the Minister's statement was approved by senior PA leadership, nor is the Ministry of Health ordinarily involved in disseminating official PA policy statements. The Consul General has strongly criticized the substance and timing of the press release in a conversation with PLO Chief Negotiator Saeb Erekat. The need for PA restraint in public comments about the report had previously been conveyed to both PA President Abu Mazen and Erekat in Ramallah by Special Envoy for Middle East Peace Mitchell and the CG on September 18.
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